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STATEMENT BY THE PRESIDENT OF THE SECURITY COUNCIL

At the 3960th meeting of the Security Council, held on 23 December 1998 in connection with the Council's consideration of the item entitled "The situation in Angola", the President of the Security Council made the following statement on behalf of the Council:

"The Security Council deplores the serious deterioration of the situation in Angola and calls for an immediate cessation of hostilities. It reaffirms its firm commitment to preserve the unity, sovereignty and territorial integrity of Angola.

"The Security Council reiterates that the primary responsibility for the failure to achieve peace in Angola clearly lies with the leadership of the União Nacional para a Independência Total de Angola (UNITA). The persistent violation by UNITA, under the leadership of Mr. Jonas Savimbi, of its obligations under the "Acordos de Paz" (S/22609, annex), the Lusaka Protocol (S/1994/1441, annex) and relevant Security Council resolutions, in particular those obligations related to the complete demilitarization of its forces and the extension of State administration throughout the national territory, has seriously undermined the peace process.

"The Security Council demands that UNITA comply immediately and without conditions with its obligations and reiterates that only a political settlement, on the basis of the relevant agreements and resolutions, will bring a lasting peace to Angola.

"The Security Council, in this context, urges the Government of Angola and UNITA to cooperate fully with the Special Representative of the Secretary-General, including by facilitating his contacts with all those key to reviving the stalled peace process and to implementing the Lusaka Protocol. It expresses concern at the public statements blaming the United Nations for the recent aggravation of the security situation in the country. The Council reiterates its full support to the United Nations Observer Mission in Angola (MONUA), whose mandate has been extended until 26 February 1999, and emphasizes that both the Government of Angola, which concurred with the extension of this mandate, and UNITA have an obligation to guarantee the safety and freedom of movement of MONUA personnel.

"The Security Council expresses its deep concern at the worsening humanitarian situation in Angola and emphasizes the responsibility of the Government of Angola and the leadership of UNITA to facilitate humanitarian assistance efforts, guarantee the safety and freedom of movement of humanitarian workers and permit an independent assessment of the needs of the civilian population, to be carried out swiftly in any part of the country as necessary. The Council also expresses concern at the plight of those must vulnerable groups, such as children, women, the elderly and internally displaced persons who are particularly at risk and need special protection.

"The Security Council urges the Government of Angola and the leadership of UNITA to ensure full respect for international humanitarian, refugee and human rights law.

"The Security Council underscores the need for the full and immediate implementation of the measures against UNITA contained in resolutions 864 (1993) of 15 September 1993, 1127 (1997) of 28 August 1997 and 1173 (1998) of 12 June 1998. It expresses deep concern at recent reports of violations of these measures, particularly those related to arms and diamonds, and expresses its intention to follow up on these reports.

"The Security Council expresses its grave concern at reports that aircraft were shot down over UNITA-controlled areas and demands full cooperation by all concerned, especially UNITA, in the investigation of these incidents, including of the fate of the crews and passengers.

"The Security Council remains actively seized of the matter."